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ON PAGE 9.

NEW YORK TIMES
18 October 1981

SOVIET-TERROR TIES CALLED OUTDATED

J. S. Intelligence Officials Say Haig Based Accusation on Decade-Old Information

By LESLIE H. GELB

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17 — Early Reagan Administration charges that the Soviet Union was directly helping terrorists were essentially based on information provided a decade ago by a Czechoslovak defector, according to senior intelligence officials.

"What we are hearing is this 10-year-old testimony coming back to us through West European intelligence and some of our own C.I.A. people," one official said. "There is no substantial new evidence."

The defector, Maj. Gen. Jan Sejna, was said to have been closely associated with Antonin Novotny, the Stalinist party leader of Czechoslovakia. The general fled to the United States in early 1968 after Mr. Novotny had been replaced by Alexander Dubcek, the leader of the short-lived liberalization period, which was ended by the Soviet-led military intervention in August 1968.

In 1972, the Central Intelligence Agency dispatched General Sejna to Western Europe to share his information on a number of subjects with intelligence agencies there, as is often done.

Sejna Reported Direct Link

General Sejna was said to have told Western intelligence agencies at the time that the Russians had trained terrorist groups like the Baader-Meinhof gang of West Germany and the Red Brigades of Italy.

American intelligence officials said there was little evidence to back up his assertion of direct Soviet involvement in international terrorism, though there is evidence of indirect links.

Last January, Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. said that the Soviet Union, as part of a "conscious policy," was "training, funding and equipping" international terrorists.

President Reagan said at the time that the Administration would give the combating of international terrorism high priority in foreign affairs.

Officials said the State Department's own Bureau of Intelligence and Research later told Mr. Haig on several occasions that there was no hard evidence to back up his assertions, and that he was basically repeating the stories of the Czechoslovak defector.

The officials said it sometimes happened that information shared by the United States with others was recycled through the intelligence network and American military attaches abroad.

General Under C.I.A. Protection

General Sejna, who remains under C.I.A. protection, could not be immediately reached for comment. In response to an inquiry, a C.I.A. press officer said any questions to him would have to be relayed by letter.

After Secretary Haig's initial remarks, the C.I.A. prepared a study that the Director of Central Intelligence, William J. Casey, rejected as inadequate. He ordered other studies that, officials said, also did not satisfy his conviction about direct Soviet responsibility.

As described by officials, the judgment of the intelligence agencies is this: In the early 1960's, the Kremlin established training and support centers in the Soviet Union and in other countries for Libyans, Iraqis, North Koreans, Angolans, members of the Palestine Liberation Organization and others.

The purpose was to help these groups with guerrilla techniques and weapons for the early stages of what the Soviet Union calls "wars of national liberation."

But later some of these centers were used by the Libyans, the P.L.O. and others to train terrorist groups like the Baader-Meinhof gang, the Red Brigades and the Japanese Red Army.

No Direct Link to Soviet Seen

The Soviet Union almost certainly knew of these subsequent activities, and there is no evidence of Soviet efforts to block them. But there is also little evidence to show that the Soviet Union was in any way directing terrorist actions.

Some intelligence experts say "it should not be necessary to draw pictures," as one put it, to establish Soviet responsibility and Soviet benefit from the activities. Others say that the Soviet Union created the centers for one purpose — support of national liberation movements — and that the centers turned into Frankenstein monsters that could not be controlled.

There is also intelligence evidence that the Soviet leaders themselves have talked about the uncontrollability of these groups, and have referred to the terrorists as "adventurists."

In an interview, William E. Colby, the former Director of Central Intelligence, summed up what many other intelligence experts said: "Given the fact that the Soviets set these centers in motion, they are not without responsibility, and there is no evidence of their urging restraint on the terrorists."

Intelligence officials react with sensitivity to the subject of Soviet complicity in terrorist activities. Some feel that recent statements, including some by Administration officials, are really accusing the intelligence agencies of covering up links between Moscow and terrorists.

Officials said the feelings on the matter ran so high that the first and unsolicited C.I.A. report after Mr. Haig's statements was, in fact, written as a rebuttal.

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